



ECHO

Ecological Health Organization, Inc.

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March 6, 2009

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Carolyn Wysocki, President of Ecological Health Organization, Inc. (ECHO) I am here to voice strong support for H.B. No. 6616 AN ACT ESTABLISHING WOOD SMOKE TO BE A PUBLIC NUISANCE.

In January, 1992-ECHO was formed as a statewide nonprofit, advocacy, support, educational and referral organization for people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) and for others who care about its prevention. MCS is a chronic disorder in which people develop increased reactions to various chemicals found in products such as pesticides, building materials, fragrances, carpets, exhaust, cleaning products and smoke... Our MCS members are living proof of the linkages between the environment and health.

MCS affects multiple organ systems (respiratory, digestive neurological, musculoskeletal, reproductive, cardiovascular) and commonly includes symptoms such as asthma, difficulty breathing and concentrating, migraines, loss of memory, dizziness, muscle pains and fatigue. There are no known cure for MCS and the most effective treatment found to date is avoidance of toxic chemicals, a very difficult task in today's world..

People with MCS can have serious adverse health reactions to wood smoke. Smoke from burning of wood results in high concentrations of toxic air pollution at ground level. An EPA Study concludes that breathing wood smoke particles during high pollution day is equivalent to smoking 4 to 18 cigarettes. Wood-burning releases pollutants including the same toxic chemicals found in cigarettes. Even more alarming, twelve chemicals in wood smoke are listed as carcinogens by the U.S. Government; twenty-five chemicals found in wood smoke are also indicated as hazardous chemicals with an ATSDR toxicological profile. Some of these chemicals include arsenic, benzene, dioxin, formaldehyde and lead. All of these chemicals can cause severe reactions in people with MCS.

Wood smoke is more than a nuisance when it penetrates inside your home." When your neighbor is burning wood, deadly pollutants are inside your house as well. This quote is from *Wood Smoke-One of America's Largest Sources of Pollution That Is Responsible for 30 ,000 Deaths Each Year*. It also says that heating with a wood stove in just one season. "Generates as much pollution as driving a care 130 ,000 miles"

Bill 6616 would give some recourse for people with MCS and also those with asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, allergies and cardiovascular diseases who are suffering serious adverse health effects from their neighbor's wood smoke. It is also very important for the public health of our communities to increase awareness of health effects of the toxic chemicals that are emitted from wood burning stoves, to prevent others from becoming ill and to decrease exacerbation of the symptoms of those who are already ill.

These educational and prevention opportunities have a potential cost savings to the Health Care System by decreasing visits to the ER for respiratory problems and asthma attacks. It also is an opportunity for Public Health to be proactive in educating the community on both the dangers of improper wood burning and alternative methods / sources for supplementing their heating units.

Preventing chemical injuries and MCS are the reasons ECHO supports HB 6616. This legislation will be another important stepping stone towards an informed and healthier Connecticut Citizenry

Thank you and remember "Prevention is my Intention"

Sincerely,
Carolyn Wysocki, President ECHO

MISSION

To safeguard the health and well-being of the environment and its inhabitants.